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SUBJECT: UN DRC Sanctions Committee Group of Experts
Discusses Current Mandate, Challenges

REF: KIGALI 34

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: During its visit to Kigali April 20-29, the UN DRC Sanctions Committee Group of Experts briefed Embassy on the focus of its current mandate and its challenges in the region. The experts highlighted the need for tighter immigration control at the DRC border, a GDRC mechanism for tracing and registering arms to reduce arms proliferation in the DRC, and enhanced traceability of illicit exploitation of natural resources fueling armed groups. They urged greater GOR cooperation, in particular in providing access to requested information. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) The five-member UN DRC Sanctions Committee Group of Experts briefed Ambassador and emboffs April 26 on its previous work, current mandate, and purpose of its April 20-29 visit to Kigali. Senegalese Chairman Ibra Deguene Ka noted that during its previous mandates, the group met with various individuals and compiled information in London, Paris, Kinshasa, and Kampala. During its current (fifth) mandate, the group will focus on southern DRC (Katanga), eastern DRC (Ituri and the Kivus), and Kinshasa. Under UNSCR 1596 and 1649, it will continue investigating individuals and companies violating the DRC arms embargo. The group has submitted an annex to the initial list of proposed names for targeted sanctions for which it will seek additional information.

Visit to Neighboring Countries

¶3. (U) In the DRC the group met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defense, and the diplomatic community, including the U.S. Embassy. Ka described the pre-electoral atmosphere in Kinshasa as tense. The group also visited Uganda, Burundi, and Tanzania.

¶4. (SBU) Ka observed that cooperation from Uganda and Rwanda were "not as expected" and that the group had encountered several problems. In Uganda the group experienced difficulty gaining access to an ammunition factory (which was accessible to the diplomatic community) despite repeated requests for access during its previous mandates.

¶5. (SBU) In Kampala, while investigating movements of rebel leaders between Uganda and the DRC, the group observed leaders freely moving about and receiving logistical support from the government. Ka noted that any assistance provided to rebel leaders is a clear violation of the arms embargo

imposed by the Security Council. The group also faced problems in getting access to air traffic logs at Entebbe civil airport. Ugandan civil aviation authorities refused to provide the logs, directing them to MONUC instead for the information.

¶16. (SBU) Ambassador told the group that UN presence in DRC has helped improve cross-border relations and that Rwanda sees peaceful co-existence as the preferred alternative to the chaos of the past. Rwanda recognizes the need for bilateral cooperation with DRC for its economic development, in such areas as the Lake Kivu methane gas project, and views the relationship between President Kagame and President Kabila as improved.

Access to Arms in Rwanda

¶17. (SBU) Ka said that the group has encountered problems in accessing the arms seized by the GOR in 2004 to trace their source. The group has met with Congolese dissident Colonel Jules Mutebutsi (reftel) and will meet with Amb. Sezibera, Special Presidential Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, and other GOR officials to discuss the problem. Ka noted that the Chair of the DRC Sanctions Committee had sent a letter to the GOR, as well as to GOU and GDRC, urging them to cooperate with the investigations of the Group of Experts. The group will make an evaluation at the conclusion of its visit to Kigali, and the Security Council will consider taking action if cooperation has not improved.

Traffic at DRC Border

¶18. (SBU) French immigration expert Jean Luc Gallet noted many problems at the porous DRC-Rwanda border and pointed out the need to secure the border, particularly prior to the DRC elections, to stabilize the region. In response to Ambassador's query as to whether the UN panel sees Rwanda as a source or transit country for arms flows to rebel groups in the DRC, the panel said that there is no evidence of any such current activity. Ambassador noted that the GOR does not have any incentive to permit the transit of arms from Rwanda to the DRC.

Exploitation of Natural Resources

¶19. (SBU) Swiss finance expert Michael Buisson observed that much of the regional cassiterite trade is illegal. In its previous report, the group made a recommendation for enhanced traceability. He noted that the Governor of North Kivu is extracting a lot of money from mining operations, enriching himself and his partners and friends, and that his NGO has been sanctioned. (Note: The NGO, "Tous Pour la Paix et Le Developpment," All for Peace and Development, is subject to travel restrictions and an assets freeze per UNSCR 1596. End note.) Buisson noted that there are reports that the proceeds from the cassiterite trade are benefiting armed groups.

¶10. (SBU) In response to the question as to whether Rwanda imports cassiterite from the DRC, Ambassador expressed his view that Rwanda sees trade with the DRC as perfectly normal, but that Rwandans are sympathetic to the need to refrain from doing anything that could exacerbate DRC-Rwanda relations.

Arms Trafficking within DRC

¶11. (SBU) Canadian arms expert Enrico Carisch, who has been conducting samplings of guns and ammunition throughout the DRC, reported that internal DRC arms trafficking of legal military stock to influential GDRC officials is of serious concern. He noted that arms trafficking from the military to the rebels is relatively easy given that the GDRC has no

centralized recordkeeping. The few records kept by the GDRC are inaccurate. He said that the GDRC needs to develop a recordkeeping mechanism to mark, trace, and register weapons to reduce arms proliferation.

¶12. (SBU) During its previous mandate, the group examined 4,000 AK-47s in Goma. All were non-NATO compliant, with about 65 percent manufactured in China and about 20 percent in Russia and former Soviet block countries. Following its visit to Kigali, the group will travel to China and Russia to review their surplus and export regulations.

¶13. (SBU) Carisch noted that in December 2004 the GOR purchased 5,000 AK-47s from the Bulgarian government and that both governments have refused to provide details on the purchase. The other difficulty, he said, is separating "the wheat from the chaff." He explained that the Group spends considerable time investigating allegations made by Amnesty International, for example, only to find that many of the suspect transactions were legal.

Civil Aviation

¶14. (SBU) Malian civil aviation expert Adboulaye Cissoko reported that he has been monitoring cross-border civil aviation flights to ensure they do not violate the arms embargo. In addition, he has been checking the cargo and passenger manifests of domestic DRC flights, with assistance from international civil aviation organizations. He reported lack of cooperation from the DRC's neighboring countries.

Tripartite Plus Fusion Cell

¶15. (SBU) The Canadian arms expert remarked that while the fusion cell is "a worthwhile political initiative" with the potential for reducing arms embargo violations, its practical benefit is limited due to the inherent nature of intelligence operations.

Call for Greater GOR Cooperation

¶16. (SBU) The chairman asked the Ambassador to urge the GOR to cooperate with the Group, noting that the P-5 are concerned about improving coordination. Ambassador assured the group of Embassy's support and acknowledged that the group has a difficult job and that getting credible information and full cooperation is difficult. He said that he would encourage the GOR to cooperate fully but reminded the group that Rwandans have a very difficult history with the UN. There is some bitterness at the top levels, which may partially explain the difficulty the group has experienced. He pointed out that it's a complicated process because anything included in their report, even if reported with caveats, is regarded by the international community as the truth.

¶17. (SBU) He encouraged the Group to mention to the GOR the improved cooperation from the GDRC and requested that it inform Embassy of any noticeable change in GOR dynamics following its meeting with GOR officials. At the conclusion of its trip to Kigali, the Group will return to the DRC, and then travel to China and Russia for further investigations. It will prepare a midterm report due May 22 and a final report due July 10.

¶18. (SBU) Ambassador subsequently encouraged GOR Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Sezibera, to cooperate with the UN panel. Sezibera said the GOR wished to do so, but some requests, such as providing serial numbers of all 5,000 weapons imported from Bulgaria, would be very burdensome.

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